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The Faires And The Fire



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Chapter 1 by Jonas Davis

Once upon a time, a widow lived with her little son, Brendan, in the wilds of northern England, and she liked to tell him tales of the fairies that lived in the woods.

The boy loved the stories, but he never believed they were true. Still, whenever the widow wished Brendan to do her bidding, she told him tales of the fairies, especially the devilish ones.

"You must watch out for them," she always said, "for the fairies can be wily tricksters."

"OK, Mother," he always said with a smile, for he didn't believe her one bit.

One wintry night when Brendan was 10, he and his mother sat by the fire. She was knitting woolen socks for her boy, and he was playing with his favorite toys. He especially loved his train set, which he had gotten for Christmas.

The evening wore on, and Brendan played happily until the clock struck nine. That's when his mother said, "Son, it's time to go to bed."

"Oh, Mother, it's so warm by the fire. Please, let me stay here a while and play some more."

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"A little while, then," the widow said, and she nodded and hummed a little, and Brendan continued playing.

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Then the clock struck 10, and the widow said, "OK, little boy, it's time to go to bed!"

Once again, Brendan complained. "It's so nice by the fire. Please, Mother. Let me stay."

The widow was tired and in no mood to argue, so a little time passed. Finally, she'd had enough.

"OK, son, I'm tired of this. Put the toys away. You have to go to bed or the fairies will come along and take you!"

She stood and put her knitting in her basket. Up the stairs she climbed, all the while calling behind her, "Come along, son. Beware of the fairies. They'll be here soon!"

But Brendan was a willful child, and instead of following, he only smiled. He was glad his mother had gone away. He pulled his sweater close and shifted closer to the fire. Just as he did that, he heard a whooshing sound, and out of the smoke in the fireplace stepped a little fairy.

She was a beautiful little thing with shining eyes and golden hair. She was only the size of a doll. At first Brendan thought he was dreaming. Perhaps he had fallen asleep after all and invented this little creature.

But when he reached out and touched her hand, he knew she was real. Her smile was kind, and so he said, "Hello. What's your name?"

"Ainsel," she said, with a haughty toss of her head.

Brendan just grinned, for he knew Ainsel meant "Own Self."

So when she asked, "What is your name?" he said, "My Ainsel," or, My Own Self.

Two could play this game, you see.

A moment later, the two of them were playing like children who had known each other all their lives. They played with trains, blocks, puzzles and balls. They were laughing and enjoying themselves.

As time passed, the fire began to grow dim, so Brendan reached out and took the poker to stir up the coals. He was poking at the little fairy's foot. She howled and fell back, her voice roaring down the fireplace.

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"Who's done that? Who's hurt my child?" the voice bellowed.

"My Ainsel," the fairy answered. "My Ainsel did it!"

Just as she said that, Brendan's mother came running down the stairs. That roar had awakened her.

When she reached the sitting room, she could only stop and stare. There was a pretty little fairy leaping up and down, tending to her 10 burned toes, and there was Brendan, staring up the chimney, listening to that voice roaring down, "I'll kick you up this chimney! I will!"

When she heard that, Brendan's mother ran and grabbed her little boy in her arms. She hurried up the stairs, running away from those fairies.

By morning, the fire had burned itself out and the fairies were gone.

From that day on, Brendan obeyed his mother -- no matter what she told him to do. And whenever she mentioned the fairies, he shivered just a little bit. That is how he learned that fairies were real. He understood that they could be fun, but sometimes they did the work of the devil, too. Most of all, he'd learned that it was silly to play with fire, or fairies.

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